

## PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION NAME REQUIREMENTS

This guide contains a list of those professions that may form professional corporations within the meaning of the Moscone-Knox Professional Corporation Act and any name-style requirements the corporation may have. It also contains a list of [occupations that may NOT form as professional corporations](#).

The following listed professions may form as professional corporations within the meaning of the Moscone-Knox Professional Corporation Act. In addition to the Name Availability Guidelines applicable to all domestic stock and nonprofit corporations, the following name requirements exist for any corporation whose purpose is to engage in the practice of one of the noted professions. As it applies to professional corporations, unless a statute or regulation for a particular profession requires specified corporate endings, we will accept the initials “PC,” “APC,” “P.C.” and “A.P.C.” as an acceptable corporate ending for any professional corporation who’s name must have words or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

### 1. Accountancy or Certified Public or Public Accountancy/Accounting/Accountant

#### a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements. Evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

#### b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

### 2. Acupuncture

#### a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the words “*acupuncture*” or “*acupuncturist*” and contains word(s) or wording denoting corporate existence limited to the following: “*Professional Corporation*,” “*Prof. Corp.*,” “*Corporation*,” “*Corp.*,” “*Incorporated*” or “*Inc.*”

#### b. Additional Restrictions

The initials “O.M.D.” and the words “Oriental Medical Doctor” may not be used without the addition of one of the following terms: “*Licensed Acupuncturist*,” “*Lic.Ac.*,” “*Certified Acupuncturist*,” “*C.A.*” or other information dispelling the implication that the provider is a medical doctor or **surgeon**.<sup>1</sup>

#### c. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 4978](#)
- ii. [Ca Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 13.7, Article 7, Section 1399.476](#)
- iii. Attorney General Opinion No. 87-103 (1988)

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<sup>1</sup> Attorney General Opinion No. 87-103, dated 3/3/88

### 3. Architecture

#### a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains **and is restricted to** one or more persons' name or last name and the words "*architectural corporation*" or the word "*architect*" or "*architects*" with word(s) or wording denoting corporate existence.<sup>2</sup>

#### b. Governing Statutes: [Business & Professions Code section 5610.3](#)

### 4. Audiology

#### a. Acceptable Name

- i. Any name that contains the word(s) "*audiology*," "*audiologist*," "*audiological*," "*hearing clinic*," "*hearing clinician*," "*hearing therapist*" or other similar title (the term "*hearing services*" is an acceptable similar title.<sup>3</sup>) and the word "*corporation*" or other wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

#### b. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 2537.4\(b\)](#)
- ii. [Business & Professions Code section 2530.3\(b\)](#)

### 5. Barbering

#### a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

#### b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

### 6. Chiropractic

#### a. Acceptable Name

- i. Any name that contains one or more persons' name(s) or last name(s) and the word "*chiropractic*" with word(s) or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.<sup>4</sup> **Note.**<sup>5</sup>

#### b. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 1054](#)
- ii. [Ca Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 4, Article 7, §367.7](#)

<sup>2</sup> Per MEK, we will accept P.C. as corporate ending.

<sup>3</sup> Per Ann Marie Delmanio at the Board, the use of "hearing services" is acceptable as a similar word.

<sup>4</sup> The Chiropractic Board limits the acceptable corporate endings to "Corporation," "Corp.," "Incorporated," "Inc.," "Professional Corporation" or "Prof. Corp." We permit more corporate endings than that. We read B&P Code section 1054 and Regulation 367.7 as separate authorizing statutes and pursuant to California Corporations Code section 13409(a), do not read section 367.7 of the Code of Regulations as limiting the corporate endings permitted under B&P Code section 1054.

<sup>5</sup> B&P Code section 1054 was amended to remove the "restricted to" language. While that same language remains in the regulations, the legislative change makes the "restricted to" language in the regulation unenforceable.

**7. Clinical Counseling or Professional Clinical Counseling**

- a. Acceptable Name
  - i. Any name that contains the words “*licensed professional clinical counselor*” or “*professional clinical counselor*” and wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.
- b. Governing Statutes
  - i. [Business & Professions Code section 4999.125](#)

**8. Clinical Social Work or Licensed Clinical Social Work**

- a. Acceptable Name
  - i. Any name that contains the words “*licensed clinical social worker*” and one of the following words denoting corporate existence” “*Professional Corporation,*” “*Prof. Corp.,*” “*Corporation,*” “*Incorporated,*” or “*Inc.*”
  - ii. The initials L.C.S.W. are not an acceptable substitute for the phrase “licensed clinical social worker.”
- b. Governing Statutes
  - i. [Business & Professions Code section 4998.2](#)
  - ii. [California Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 18, Article 4.5, Section 1850.6](#)

**9. Contracting General Engineering Contracting or General Building Contracting or Specialty Contracting<sup>6</sup>**

- a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements. Evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.
- b. Governing Statutes/Regulations
  - i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
  - ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**10. Cosmetology**

- a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.
- b. Governing Statutes/Regulations
  - i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
  - ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

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<sup>6</sup> [See Business & Professions Code section 7055.](#)

11. **Dental Hygiene**<sup>7</sup>

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

12. **Dentistry**<sup>8</sup>

a. Acceptable Name - Any name that complies with **either one** of the following:

- i. Any name that contains **and is restricted to** one or more persons' name(s) or last name(s) and the words "*dental corporation*" or other word(s) or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

A persons' name may include one or more initials indicating a dental degree such as D.D.S., D.D.Sc., D.M.D., B.D.S or "Dentist." If one of the noted a dental degrees is included in the name, they may also add additional non-dental degrees such as M.P.H., P.H.D., M.S. and **M.D.S.**<sup>9</sup> Their name may also be preceded by "Dr."

OR

- ii. Any name that contains the family name of one or more of the past, present, or prospective associates, partners, shareholders or members and the words "*dental office,*" "*dental practice*" or "*dental group.*"<sup>10</sup>

b. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 1804](#)
- ii. [Business & Professions Code section 1701.5](#)

13. **DIETITIAN (Must use Registered Dietitian, see below)**

<sup>7</sup> See Business & Professions Code sections 1765 and 1766.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the profession of Dentistry, the purpose statement may include the specialty of "Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery."

<sup>9</sup> Per David Wolf at the Dental Board 5/6/03 and 10/01/03.

<sup>10</sup> Per my discussion with Norine Marks at Dept of Consumer Affairs – Legal, on 2/4/03, the board does not permit a corporation to have a fictitious name under this statute. They require the corporate name to comply with B&P Code § 1804, but permit them to do business under a fictitious name. We permit a name that complies with either.

**14. Engineering, Professional Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering or Civil Engineering**<sup>11</sup>

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements<sup>12</sup>; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**15. Geology (or Professional Geology)**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**16. Land Surveying (of Professional Land Surveying)**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**17. Landscape Architecture**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

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<sup>11</sup> Structural Engineering, Geotechnical Engineering and Soil Engineering are subspecialties of Civil Engineering and may not be used as the profession. They may use the profession of Engineering, Professional Engineering or Civil Engineering and add "specializing in [Structural, Soil or Geotechnical] Engineering."

<sup>12</sup> California Business and Professions Code section 6738 prohibits the use of a person's name in the name of the corporation unless that person is registered by the board in engineering, or is a licensed land surveyor architect or registered geologist. Since we cannot verify this information, we will accept any name and leave it to the board to determine the acceptability of any person's name in the corporation's name.

- b. Governing Statutes/Regulations
  - i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
  - ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**18. Law**

- a. Acceptable Name<sup>13</sup>
  - i. Any name that includes wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.
  - ii. *The State Bar also accepts “L.C.,” “LC,” “P.A.,” and Professional Association” as corporate endings. The State Bar does not accept “P.L.C.” and “PLC” as corporate endings<sup>14</sup> and we accept “PC,” “APC,” “P.C.,” and “A.P.C.”*
- b. Governing Statutes
  - i. [Business & Professions Code section 6171\(c\)](#)
  - ii. [Law Corporation Rules of the State Bar of California Section IV\(A\)\(5\)](#)

**19. Marriage and Family Therapy (Counseling)<sup>15</sup>**

- a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains one or more of the words “marriage,” “family,” or “child” together with one or more of the words “counseling,” “counselor,” “therapy” or “therapist”<sup>16</sup> and one of the following words or abbreviations denoting corporate existence: “Professional Corporation,” “Prof. Corp.,” “Corporation,” “Corp.,” “Incorporated,” or “Inc.”
- b. Governing Statutes
  - i. [Business & Professions Code section 4987.7](#)
  - ii. [Ca Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 18, Article 4.5, Section 1850.6](#)

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<sup>13</sup> A Foreign Professional Law Corp, must comply with name style requirements or do a DBA. Corporations Code section 13404.5(b) requires foreign professional law corporations to register with the Bar and in order to register, the corporation must comply with the name requirements.

<sup>14</sup> Per email from Mr. Robert Henderson at the California State Bar, dated 1/15/02 and 7/25/01. Letter from State Bar to Brad Norris dated 6/11/95. Policy confirmed by Todd Vlaanderen on 5/12/06 with State Bar Office of Certification 415-538-2519.

<sup>15</sup> Sections of the Business & Professions Code were amended in 1999 and 2000 to regulate the practice of “Marriage and Family Therapy” rather than Marriage and Family Counseling. However, a number of statutes and regulations relating to such corporations still reference Marriage and Family Counseling. At this time we will accept both terms as the profession. Although acceptable in the name of the corporation, the purpose statement may not include the word “Child.” The Business and Professions code licenses “Marriage and Family Therapy” as the profession.

<sup>16</sup> Notes from several discussions with individuals at the Board of Behavioral Sciences in 1999 and 2000 indicate that the Board accepts the word “therapy” in lieu of the word therapist found in the statute. However, the statute requires one of three words and “therapy” is not among them and we should not accept it as a substitute for one of those words.

**20. Medicine**<sup>17</sup>

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that is not deceptive, misleading or confusing. A medical corporation may not use the words "podiatry" or "podiatrists."

b. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 2415\(b\)\(3\)](#)
- ii. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 13, Chapter 1, Art 14, §1350.3\(a\)](#)
- iii. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 13, Chapter 1, Article 13, §1344\(c\)](#)

**21. Naturopathic Medicine or Naturopathy**

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the words "naturopathic" or "naturopathic doctor" and wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

b. Governing Statutes

Business and Professions Code section 3674

**22. Nursing or Registered Nursing**<sup>18</sup>

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the word(s) "*Nursing*" or "*Registered Nursing*" and words or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

b. Governing Statutes

[Business & Professions Code section 2778](#)

**23. Occupational Therapy**<sup>19</sup>

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> In addition to the profession of Medicine, the purpose statement may include the designation of one of the following specialties "Anesthesiology," "Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery," "Psychiatry" and "Radiology."

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the profession of Nursing or Registered Nursing, the purpose statement may include the specialty of "Nurse Anesthesia" or "Nurse Practitioner."

<sup>19</sup> Licensed profession under Business & Professions Code sections 2570 through 2570.32



## 24. **Optometry**

a. Acceptable Name - Any name that complies with **either one** of the following:

- i. Any name that contains the word “*optometry*” or “*optometric*.”<sup>20</sup>

OR

- ii. Any name that contains **and is restricted to** one or more persons’ name(s) or last name(s) and words/abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

The word “*Optometrist*” or the letters “*Opt.D.*” or “*O.D.*” may also be used, but only if the name contains one of the following corporate endings:

“*Optometric Corporation*,” “*Optometric Corp.*,” “*Optometry Corporation*,” “*Optometry Corp.*,” “*Professional Corporation*,” “*Prof. Corp.*,” “*Professional Optometric Corporation*,” “*Professional Optometry Corporation*,” “*Professional Optometric Corp.*,” “*Professional Optometry Corp.*,” “*Corporation*,” “*Corp.*,” “*Incorporated*” or “*Inc.*”

The word “*Doctor*” or the abbreviation “*Dr.*” prior to a person’s name is considered part of their name and is acceptable.

b. Governing Statutes

- i. [Business & Professions Code section 3163](#)  
ii. [Business & Professions Code section 3078](#)  
iii. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 15, Article 7, §1546](#)  
iv. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 15, Article 3, §1518](#)

## 25. **Osteopathic Medicine**

a. Acceptable Name

- i. Any name that contains a corporate ending is acceptable.

b. Governing Statutes

- i. [California Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 16, Article 14, §1676](#)  
ii. [California Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 16, Article 14, §1677](#)  
iii. [Business & Professions Code section 2413 & 2415](#)

## 26. **Pharmacy**

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the word “*pharmacist*,” “*pharmacy*” or “*pharmaceutical*” and wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

b. Governing Statutes

[Business & Professions Code section 4152](#)

## 27. **Physical Therapy**

<sup>20</sup> AB 488, effective 1/1/06 re-numbered Bus. & Prof. Code section 3125 to 3078. Bus. & Prof. Code section 3163 still makes reference to Section 3125 rather than the new section number 3078.



- a. Acceptable Name
  - i. Any name that contains the words “*physical therapy*” or “*physical therapist*,” or “*physiotherapy*” and wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.
  - ii. The Physical Therapy Board will accept “P.C.” as a corporate ending.<sup>21</sup>
- b. Governing Statutes
  - [Business & Professions Code section 2693](#)
  - [Business & Professional Code section 2622](#)

**28. Physician Assistant**

- a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the word “*physician assistant*” and wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.
- b. Governing Statutes: [Business & Professions Code section 3543](#)

**29. Podiatry**

- a. Acceptable Name

Any name that is not deceptive, misleading or confusing. A podiatry corporation may not use the word “medical.”
- b. Governing Statutes
  - i. [Business & Professions Code section 2415\(b\)\(3\)](#)
  - ii. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 13, Chapter 1, Art 14, §1350.3\(a\)](#)
  - iii. [Ca. Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 13, Chapter 1, Article 13, §1344\(c\)](#)

**30. Psychology**

- a. Acceptable Name - Any name that complies with **either one** of the following:
  - i. Any name that contains one of the following words (or group of words):  
“*psychology*,” “*psychological*,” “*psychologist*,” “*psychology consultation*,”  
“*psychology consultant*,” “*psychometry*,” “*psychometrics*,”  
“*psychometrist*,” “*psychotherapy*,” “*psychotherapist*,” “*psychoanalysis*,”  
“*psychoanalyst*” **and** wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.
  - OR
  - ii. Any name that contains the words “*psychology group*” or “*psychology clinic*.”
- b. Governing Statutes

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<sup>21</sup> Pursuant to telephone conversation with Steve Hartzel at the Board of Physical Therapy 4/16/01.

- i. Business & Professions Code section [2998](#) & [2902](#)
- ii. [Business & Professions Code section 2930.5\(b\)\(4\)](#)

**31. Real Estate Brokerage , Real Estate , Real Estate Sales or Real Estate Appraisal**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**32. Registered Dietitian**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**33. Respiratory Care or Respiratory Therapy**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

- i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)
- ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

**34. Shorthand Reporting**

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains **and is restricted to** one or more persons' name(s) or last name(s) and the words "*shorthand reporting corporation*," "*certified shorthand reporter*" or "*C.S.R.*" and the words "*professional corporation*" or other wording or abbreviation denoting corporate existence.

b. Governing Statutes

[Business & Professions Code section 8043](#)

**35. Speech-Language Pathology**

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains one of the following words: “*speech pathologist*,” “*speech pathology*,” “*speech therapy*,” “*speech correction*,” “*speech correctionist*,” “*speech therapist*,” “*speech clinic*,” “*speech clinician*,” “*language pathologist*,” “*language pathology*,” “*logopedics*,” “*logopedist*,” “*communicology*,” “*communicologist*,” “*aphasiologist*,” “*voice therapy*,” “*voice therapist*,” “*voice pathology*,” “*voice pathologist*,” “*language therapist*,” “*phoniatriest*” or any similar title and the word “*corporation*” or wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.

b. Governing Statutes

Business & Professions Code section [2537.4\(a\)](#) & [2530.3](#)

**36. Veterinary Medicine**

a. Acceptable Name

Any name that contains the words “*veterinary corporation*” or wording or abbreviations denoting corporate existence.<sup>22</sup>

b. Governing Statutes

i. [Business & Professions Code section 4911](#)

**37. Vocational Nursing**

a. Acceptable Name

ANY name permitted by California Corporations Code section 201. There are no specific name requirements; evaluate the same as any general stock corporation.

b. Governing Statutes/Regulations

i. [California Corporations Code section 201](#)

ii. [California Corporations Code section 13409\(a\)](#)

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<sup>22</sup> A literal reading of the statute permits any corporate name as long as it contains a corporate ending.

**Occupations NOT permitted to form as Moscone-Knox Professional Corporations**

**Adult Care Home or Adult Care**

**Automotive Repair**

**Business Consulting**

**Clinical Trial Management**

**Computer Services - Internet**

**Construction**

**Consulting Services**

**Customs Broker**

**Dermatology (you may suggest medicine since dermatology is a branch of medicine)**

**e-Commerce / Retail**

**Economic Development**

**Environmental Consulting**

**Escrow / Escrow Company Transactions**

**Food Service**

**Health Care**

**Home Inspection**

**Insurance (including Broker, Agent or Services)**

**Investments**

**Massage Therapy**

**Medical Diagnostic Services**

**Motion Picture Production**

**Mortgage Broker**

**Mortgage Lending**

**Neuropsychology**

**Nutritionist**

**Orthodontics / Orthodontistry (you may suggest dentistry)**

**Orthopedics (you may suggest medicine)**

**Ophthalmology (you may suggest medicine)**

**Plumbing**

**Private Investigations**<sup>23</sup>

**Private Patrol Operator**<sup>24</sup>

**Private Security Services**

**Public Relations**

**Psychiatry and Psychiatric**

A professional corporation may not list Psychiatry or Psychiatric as a profession. These corporations should form as professional medical corporations.

**Psychotherapy**<sup>25</sup> (you may suggest Psychology)

**Qualified Intermediary**

**Radiation Therapy**

**Radiation Therapy Technology**

**Radiology**

**Radiological Support Services**

**Real Estate Investment / Services / Management / Lending**

**Speech Therapy**

**Residential Mortgage**

**Urology** (you may suggest medicine)

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<sup>23</sup> Business and Professions Code section 7520 specifically refers to this as a “business.”

<sup>24</sup> Business and Professions Code section 7582 specifically refers to this as a “business.”

<sup>25</sup> Psychotherapy is a psychological service/method and is not separately licensed under the Business & Profession Code.